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CITE 10 July 1957

DATE 1-16-80 REVIEWER 372044 1

THE CHARGES IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP

A feud in the highest body of the Communist Party of the USSR resulted at the end of June in the most sweeping political purge since the death of Stalin and a tremendous victory for Nikita Khrushchev, who now is firmly in control of Soviet affairs.

Khrushchev succeeded in ousting five of his eleven colleagues from full membership in the Party Presidium--the effective ruling body of the USSR--and in removing another from candidate membership in the Presidium and the Secretariat, which is the Party's principal executive arm. Five new members have been brought into the Presidium to create a body in which Khrushchev's authority will be overwhelming though still short of absolute. (See Part III for biographies of members of the new Presidium.) Thus he is now in a position to press ahead in his efforts to increase the growth rates of Soviet industry and agriculture and to reduce international tension.

The chief purge victims--Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and

Shepilov, who joined them--were charged with anti-party

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methods is attempting to change the composition of the party's leading bodies, with opposition to criticism of Stalin and the policy of peaceful coexistence, and with fighting certain of the party's economic policies.

Khalenkov had suffered an earlier defeat at Khrushchev's hands in early 1956, primarily over the question of investment priorities. At that time he was dropped from the premiership and publicly humiliated. Molotov and Kaganovich, the oldest of the old Bolsheviks, have been unable to reconcile themselves to the various adjustments in foreign and domestic policy which have taken place since Stalin's death. It seems unlikely that the three ~~SSSR~~ men had a common view on all points of policy. Khalenkov was probably not a "Stalinist" in the sense that he insisted on all of the old methods like Molotov and Kaganovich. The three seem to have united mainly because of their opposition to Khrushchev's continued dominance in the formulation of Soviet policy.

Khepilov evidently joined the opposition late in the game

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and for purely opportunistic reasons. One report suggests that, in return for his support, he was offered Khrushchev's post as Party First Secretary. If true, this would explain post-purge denunciations of him as a contemptible second-rater and Khrushchev's characterization of him as a "double-dealer."

Prominent among the charges levied at these men by the Central Committee were those dealing with their opposition to economic policies. This fact, plus the denunciation of Berukhin and Saburov--two economic specialists--from the Presidium suggests that differences over economic policies touched off the sequence of events which led to the shake-up and Khrushchev's victory.

Marshal Georgi Zhukov's promotion to full membership in the Presidium suggests that even he sided with Khrushchev in the latter's fight against the ousted presidium members. There are persistent reports that Zhukov's support was crucial to Khrushchev's success. In this case, his elevation to full membership in the Presidium could hardly have been avoided. His new position gives him a political standing which no Soviet military leader has ever enjoyed

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on policy-making.

Implications for domestic policy.

The question of the future of collective leadership may not be answered for some time. Khrushchev, who will certainly be more dominant than heretofore, may wish to continue the system of "collective leadership," but it will be more of a facade for one-man leadership than at any time in the last four years since there are ~~now~~ no leaders of stature left on the Presidium who are likely to oppose his views.

Although
One possible exception is Zhukov; ~~although~~ he has stressed in the past that his primary concern is military affairs, not politics, the demarcation line between these areas is virtually indistinguishable in dealing with such matters as disarmament, satellite security, and Soviet industrial output. Thus the kind of accommodation Khrushchev and Zhukov work out between themselves will have an important bearing on the course of the post-purge leadership.

Of the remaining old members of the Presidium, Mikoyan,

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but it may be limited to how far they can persuade Khrushchev.

The new members as individuals are no match for Khrushchev and are not likely to pose serious restraints to his policies. He may, however, be forced to heed their general views and allow himself to be persuaded by their opinions.

Khrushchev seems committed to decisions of the 20th Party Congress and genuinely convinced that the basic goals of the de-Stalinization effort and industrial reorganization--to release initiative and promote a sense of participation at all levels of Soviet society--are essential for Soviet growth and power.

The Central Committee resolution and Khrushchev's subsequent statements amount to a demagogic platform of promises of pie-in-the-sky to the Soviet people. Khrushchev summarized his optimistic economic outlook in his 6 July Leningrad speech, "...We want our industry and its basis, heavy industry, to grow and become stronger; we want our agriculture...to develop even more successfully. We want the Soviet people to have enough meat, butter, milk and fruit. We want our shops to be filled with many

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the life of man more beautiful." The "next task," he said is to catch up with US per capita production in meat, milk, and butter, an accomplishment which will be... "something stronger than any atom or hydrogen bombs..." is the struggle with capitalism.

Khrushchev will have a clearer field in implementing his program than before, but the regime's most pressing problems do not arise from any lack of vigor in execution of the program. Rather they stem from difficulties inherent in the program itself. Khrushchev seems convinced that the USSR can accomplish all of its economic objectives through improved organization and Socialist competition and the hard decisions over the proper allocations of scarce materials between the parts of the economy still have not been taken. In addition, the regime must promote local initiative without encouraging "localism" and losing central control. It must encourage intellectual ~~essentially~~ creativity without losing disciplinary control and permitting questioning of the system itself.

The appointment of NIK Khrushchev to the Presidium suggests that there will be no reduction in economic effort in support of the Soviet armed forces and that military requirements may be given

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an even higher priority than in past years.

Implications for intra-bloc relations

Soviet relations with the satellites probably will continue generally along the lines developed since the 20th Party Congress and will be designed to give the satellites the appearance of independent states within the bloc. The USSR will be faced, however, with the same dilemma that plagued it after the 20th congress-- how to adopt a less dominating relationship with the satellites without letting resurgent nationalism fragment the socialist camp.

Soviet-Polish relations will in general probably be more harmonious although the Soviet leaders will continue to be concerned by the influence that the Polish road to socialism will have in Eastern Europe. Certain outstanding problems with the Poles may now be settled, such as Polish economic claims against the USSR and the Polish desire for greater latitude in implementing the program of repatriating Polish citizens in the USSR.

One of the most important steps that the Soviet leaders could

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take to help build up the prestige of the satellites and possibly

To give substance to its efforts to gain satellite co-operation, the USSR can be expected to carry on with its extensive program of economic assistance to the satellites. As a further mark of respect for the satellites the USSR /probably will continue to conduct its economic relations with them more and more on a direct bilateral

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into direct economic negotiations with the West.

To counter a deviative tendency that a less rigid policy toward the East European countries might encourage, the USSR has stressed to these countries the absolute necessity of maintaining the bloc unity. That this lesson is clearly understood is indicated by the initial satellite reaction to the purges in the USSR—unequivocal support for the Soviet leadership.

Khrushchev's move will clearly receive Peking's fullest support. The Chinese in the past year have suggested that they would welcome the removal of remaining Stalinist elements in the USSR and satellites. Peking's response to the Central Committee resolution on the shakeup was a brief message expressing confidence that the action "will help unite and consolidate" the Soviet party. This message was followed by similar reactions from North Korea and North Vietnam.

Implications for Soviet Foreign Policy

Since Khrushchev and his followers have been consistently outspoken in their praise of the peaceful coexistence policies laid down at the 20th Party Congress, the major lines of Soviet foreign policy will undoubtedly remain unchanged. After Khrushchev has

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consolidated his power, he may undertake a more imaginative and energetic application of these policies as a result of the removal of the conservative Molotov faction which may have imposed restraints on foreign policy decisions.

One byproduct of the purge will be to aid Moscow's attempts to restore its pre-Hungary posture of peaceful coexistence, particularly since the Central Committee resolution blamed Molotov specifically for opposing a number of conciliatory steps in foreign policy. Khrushchev will probably try to exploit the purge of the conservative presidium members to revive his campaign for top-LEVEL level bilateral meetings with Free World leaders—one of the policies Molotov was accused of opposing. He will also probably push cultural and technical exchanges with all countries more vigorously.

But Moscow has already warned the West against expecting a radical change in foreign policy as a result of the purge. Moscow radio on 4 July stated that it is "entirely unjustified" to hope for a "certain compromising attitude in Soviet foreign policy."

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The disarmament negotiations in London may well become a testing ground for any new Soviet approach to foreign policy problems.

There is no indication, however, that Moscow intends to make further concessions on disarmament or view more favorably the Western approach to this subject. Khrushchev probably believes that the Soviet proposal of 14 June for a suspension of nuclear tests for a two- or three-year period has placed the USSR in the advantageous position of the initiator of a single, clear-cut proposal that can be easily understood by all. Moscow radio on 3 July accused the West of attempting to sabotage the disarmament question and contrasted the "extreme precision" of the Soviet proposals on test suspension with the "vague and involved" Western proposals.

Perhaps more than in any other area of foreign policy, Molotov's removal will affect Moscow's turbulent relations with Yugoslavia. With the Molotov faction eliminated, Khrushchev probably will initiate a change through strong efforts to improve relations with Tito, possibly including a trip to Belgrade. Khrushchev may well also take measures to clamp down on satellite officials of

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II for fuller analysis of Soviet-Yugoslav relations).

Effects in Western Europe

Official opinion in Europe generally agrees that the Soviet shakeup was primarily the result of a power struggle and Soviet experts in Britain and France see little change of any major changes in Moscow's policies. They were against the development of a mood of relaxation in the Western Alliance and German Chancellor Schmidt has stated publicly that she will not believe any change has taken place until it shows up in the Soviet attitude in the London disarmament talks. A Foreign Ministry official in Paris fears that Soviet leaders may use the ~~SHAKEUP~~ shakeup as a gambit to bolster their claims to ~~SHAKE~~ peace-loving intentions, but he sees little probability that it will have any repercussions in the satellites other than in Rumania.

Some European commentators, however, including part of the press in Italy and Switzerland, have dwelt on the possibility of a period of better understanding between East and West. West German Socialist chief Erich Ollenhauer interprets the change as indicating that

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some officials in the German Foreign Ministry tend to be optimistic regarding Soviet relations with non-Bloc countries.

Both London and Paris have indicated some concern over the apparent elimination of collective leadership which they believe blocked at least some ~~MECHANICAL~~ reckless maneuvering by Moscow. The French believe Khrushchev is particularly dangerous and the London foreign office believes Soviet foreign policy is likely to be "more clever, more enterprising, more elastic, and more insidious" than ever.

Reactions by Western Communist Parties

Paoliro Togliatti and Maurice Thorez, leaders of the two largest non-Bloc Communist parties in Italy and France, were quick to support the purge. Togliatti stated in the Party paper L'Unita on 6 July that the move was "absolutely necessary and fully justified." The Central Committee of the French party has expressed total agreement, and a Foreign Ministry spokesman has noted Communist leader Thorez's enthusiastic response despite the fact that his party is the most Stalinist of the Western European Communist parties. He believes Thorez may take the opportunity to crush revisionists in the

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that the USSR was "making it clear to all the ~~WORLD~~ world that there will be no return to the wrong methods of the past."

The Indonesian Communist daily in Jakarta, Marisa Sahjat, accepted and defended the shifts in the Soviet hierarchy without specifically commenting on the individuals involved. The daily editorialized, "Errors are not necessarily confined to newcomers, but also can be made by old-timers. If we understand this, we should not be surprised to hear of top-level dismissals."

This interpretation lays a smooth basis for explaining the purge to the Indonesian Communist rank and file, and leave Indonesian Communist leadership prepared to accept any other internal ~~WORLD~~ political developments in the Soviet ~~WORLD~~ Union.

The paper added, perhaps for the edification of non-Communists and fellow travelers, that the purge was further proof that the Soviet government was placing world peace above everything else, and that the Soviet Communist Party--in order to support this policy--did not hesitate to do away with its political and ideological barriers.

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